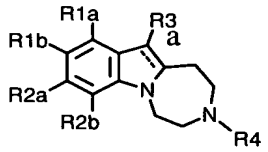
ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A compound of formula I:



I

where a is a single bond or double bond, and where

R1a, R1b, R2a and R2b are each independently

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, OR5, CONR5R6, COR5, CO2R5, $Y(CH_2)_mXR5$ or $YC(O)(CH_2)_mXR5$, where m = 0-3, Y = CH_2, S, O, or NR6, X = CH_2, S, O, NR6;

(b) $(CH2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(c) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following:halogen, CN, NO_2, COR7, OR7, NR7R8, SR7, CO2R7, CONR7R8 or NR7COR8; and where

R3 is

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, alkyl, Ar, OR5, SR5, CHO, CONR5R6, COR5, CO2R5, $(Y)_o(CH2)_nXR5$, C(O)C(O)XR5, $(Y)_o(CH_2)_nC(O)XR5$, $C(O)(CH2)_nXR5$, $(Y)_o(CH2)_nN(R6)C(O)R5$, $(Y)_o(CH2)_nN(R6)S(O)_2R5$, $(Y)_o(CH2)_nN(R6)C(O)OR5$, $(Y)_o(CH2)_nN(R6)C(O)NR5R6$ where o = 0 or 1, n = 0-3, X = CH_2, S, O, or NR6 and

Y=CH_2, S, O or NR6, where Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(b) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following: halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R8, SR10, CO2R10, CONR10R8 or NR10COR8; and where

R4, R5 and R6 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following: halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, CO2R10, CONR10R11 or NR10COR11; or where R5 and R6 are linked to form a 3 to 8 member ring; or

(b) $(CH_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; and where

R7, R8, and R9 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl groups, wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, CO2R10, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, or where R7, R8, or R9 are linked to form a ring; or

(b) $(CH2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR10, CF_3, OCF_3, SR10, SO_2R10, $SO_2NR10R11$, NR10R11, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, CO_2R10, COR10, or R10; and where

R10, R11 and R12 are each independently H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl;

or a stereoisomer or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.